

Grammar Lessons Teach Critical Thinking Today



IN HAWAII . . . Spee. 4/C Carroll L. Aamodt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Aamodt, 3848 W. 226th St., recently re-enlisted in the U. S. Army for a period of six years. He is a medic in Company E, 25th Medical Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. The 19-year-old former South High School graduate entered the Army in September 1962.

"Everyone would like to know how to write better," says Dr. J. H. Hull, superintendent of Torrance schools. "Even professional writers are seldom satisfied with their first effort."

Proper speaking and writing are important, according to Dr. Hull, and to help Torrance students read and speak effectively, grammar is stressed in the classrooms.

Although the teaching methods vary according to the individual teacher, the emphasis and intensity with which grammar is taught in the city's high schools are uniform, the superintendent says.

BECAUSE grammar is the backbone of English, it gets stressed regardless of whether the vehicle for its usage happens to be literature or theme writing. Grammar isn't always necessarily referred to as a formalized unit on the study of grammar per se. Often in a high school English class it is a natural outgrowth of other areas of the course of study. But it does get an estimated 50 per cent of class time.

A West High teacher, R.

Morgan McSweeney, puts it this way: "Learning grammar for grammar's sake alone would be as meaningless as learning spelling without ever applying it. It's what we do with grammar that we are primarily interested in."

Because there have been new developments in methods of teaching grammar and its application during the past few years, there are many books available that now make application of new language research. Just as a good cook has her choice of recipes, a good teacher has a choice within those textbooks approved by the district, and teachers are encouraged to supplement the material in the textbook with materials they themselves develop.

IN ADDITION to textbooks, students who need more practice with grammar may also use workbooks. Discussing the workbook rules and doing the additional exercises reinforces learning. Those who have difficulties are drilled in writing sentences while more capable students demonstrate their understanding of the rules by

writing paragraphs. Paragraph development is stressed in the freshman and sophomore year, with students learning how to use transitional devices to link the paragraphs into a theme. Diagnostic tests are used by teachers to determine individual strengths and weaknesses in such areas as spelling, punctuation, usage and sentence structure. The results of these tests form the basis for additional assistance.

"Each class is different," states Mrs. Frances M. Voorhees who teaches juniors and seniors at North High. "We meet the needs of this class and this school at this time and use the books to meet these particular needs."

OCCASIONALLY, where it fits a class or student, programmed instruction is used, with discretion, to supplement classroom instruction. A student may work at his own rate to correct his own errors in grammar and usage.

"In recent years, linguistic research has done much to improve grammar textbooks and techniques," according to

Mrs. Barbara Hawkins of the South High English Department. "Teachers modify this research to fit their own classroom approach to grammar."

Torrance grammar teachers have been keeping their collective finger on the pulse of the colleges. In recent years they've noticed a change in the nature of college entrance exams. Where the emphasis was formerly on grammar, in recent years it has shifted to an emphasis on the grammar of writing.

COLLEGE EMPHASIS on the grammar of writing has progressed to the point that applicants are now required to develop a critical essay on many entrance examinations. Because of this shift to critical thinking, says Ronald Rudolph, Torrance High English instructor, "it behooves the English teacher to develop a pattern for organization and to provide students with a background for critical thinking."

Even the non-college students must develop a skill at using grammar, so the non-college English courses must concentrate on the basic

skills of writing clearly and critically. Whether the teacher teaches rules first and then has students apply them or whether he has them write first and then teaches them that which their writing shows they need to know, isn't the important thing. It's being able to think critically, achieve grammatical syntax, get correct sentence structure and apply their knowledge in communicating that is the goal of the high school English class," Rudolph concluded.

Spring Semester Council at Yukon Elementary Installed

Student Council officers at Yukon Elementary School, Torrance, were installed during an assembly program. Inducted with president James Oliver were: Christine Vandegrift, vice president; Karla Klapp, secretary; Cheryl Holder, historian; Tim Hilger, newspaper editor; Denise Fisher, activities director; Tim Anderson, boys' athletic director, and Barbara Larson, girls' athletic director.

Participating in the ceremony were the outgoing officers, including Dan Anderson, president; Denise Fisher, vice president; Christine Vandegrift, secretary; Barbara Larson, historian; Gary Pia, newspaper editor; Tana Zam-

barell, activities director; Tim Anderson, boys' athletic director, and Sharon Hibbert, girls' athletic director.

YESSAC (Yukon Elementary School Student Advisory Committee) meets weekly under sponsorship of Miss Joanne Reetta, to study school problems and conduct social activities. Two representatives of each class in grades four through eight serve on the committee.

NEW POST
The promotion of Sidney Bentley, 21541 Craig Court, to assistant treasurer-controller has been announced by the Ralph C. Sutro Co., Los Angeles mortgage banking firm.

Volunteers Near End Of Study

Local volunteers for the American Cancer Society are entering the final lap of a giant epidemiology study which polling experts said would not be feasible, according to Mrs. Reed L. Pack, epidemiology chairman for the society's Centinela Valley-South Bay District.

A six year study of the health of 45,000 persons in Los Angeles was undertaken in 1959. The study will not be completed until next year but some findings have been reported.

"Lung cancer death rates were 18 times as high among heavy cigarette smokers as among men who never smoked regularly," said Mrs. Pack. "Coronary artery disease death rates were three times as high among heavy cigarette smokers."

"THE DATA we have collected proves beyond a reasonable doubt that there is a link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer. It gives important evidence of the relationship between smoking and other forms of cancer and other diseases," continued Mrs. Pack.

Contributions to the American Cancer Society are paying for the materials used and the complex work of handling and analyzing the information.

Knowledge of Russian Can Open Career

Career opportunities based primarily on the ability to speak and read Russian are expanding in both science and government, according to D. Victor Holmgren, language instructor at El Camino College.

"Congressional committees and individual members of Congress constantly need the services of translators, interpreters and researchers with a command of Russian," Holmgren said.

"In science, particularly in matters of space, as Russian materials become available, they will serve as valuable sources for work in graduate and research studies."

El Camino offers Russian I daily at 11 a.m.; scientific Russian daily at 12 noon, conversational Russian on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11 a.m., and Russian II on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

'Inheritance' Sermon Topic

"Inheritance and Possession" will be the subject of today's family worship service at the Unity Church of Christianity, Walteria Park Building, 3855 W. 242nd St. Tuesday morning classes in Lessons in Truth are held at Church House, 2256 Torrance Blvd. Further information may be obtained by telephoning 320-4271.

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